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ABSTRACT

The classroom management techniques of elementary school teachers were observed to determine their effectiveness in promoting desirable on-task behavior on the part of pupils. Seven approaches to class management were used as a framework for observation--authoritarian, behavior modification, common sense, group process, instructional emphasis, permissive, and socioemotional relationship between teacher and student. Thirty-five elementary school teachers were observed for two full morning classroom sessions during the second semester of the school year. During each observation period, the observer recorded student on-task behavior and teacher managerial behaviors. Results indicate that the use of group processes and socioemotional climate managerial behaviors are positively related to student on-task behavior, while the use of authoritarian and permissive managerial behaviors are negatively related. A pluralistic approach using behavior modification, group process, and socioemotional climate approaches produced the most satisfactory on-task behaviors in students. (JD)

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MANAGERIAL BEHAVIORS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS AND STUDENT ON-TASK BEHAVIOR

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A review of the recent research in teacher effectiveness suggests that student on-task behavior--student engagement in the activity the teacher expects them to be engaged in and attending to (Evertson and Anderson, 1977, page 8)--is related to certain student outcomes. A number of recent studies have shown student on-task behavior to be related to student performance in the basic skills as measured by standarized achievement tests (Berliner and Rosenshine, 1976; Bloom, 1976; Coker, 1977; Medley, 1977; Rosenshine, 1977; and Rosenshine and Berliner, 1978). In addition, several studies have found disruptive classroom environments--situations in which students are exhibiting off-task behavior--to be negatively related to academic achievement (Coker, 1977; Good and Grouws, 1977; Medley, 1977; and Rosenshine, 1976). These findings suggest that student on-task behavior is an important mediating variable between teacher behaviors and student academic outcomes.

The identification of those teacher behaviors which are related to the establishment and maintenance of student on-task behavior seems, therefore, to be a task of considerable importance and promise. Initial efforts in this regard suggest that those teacher behaviors which are most influential in establishing and maintaining student on-task behavior may be managerial rather than instructional behaviors. That is, teacher managerial behaviors--those behaviors the teacher uses in attempting "to create and maintain conditions in which instruction can take place effectively and efficiently" (Weber, 1977, page 287)--may be more effective in promoting student on-task behavior than teacher instructional behaviors--those behaviors which are "intended to facilitate the student's achievement of specific educational objectives directly" (Weber, 1977, page 287). This position is supported by several recent studies which have

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indicated that teacher instructional behaviors are not effective in promoting student on-task behavior or student achievement in the absence of effective teacher managerial behaviors (Berliner, 1978; and Anderson and Evertson, 1978).

Although the managerial dimension of teaching is now receiving the attention of some educational researchers, this is a very recent trend. Research in the area of classroom management has been noticeably lacking. As recently as 1977, Rosenshine asserted that classroom management is a critical problem which to date has received little attention. While a variety of different classroom management techniques and approaches have been described--and advocated--far too little has been done to examine them empirically. This study attempted to do so.

This study was designed to examine the relationship of teacher managerial behaviors to student on-task behavior. For this purpose, the framework of classroom management developed by Weber (1977) was employed. Weber has analyzed and categorized the various behavioral approaches and systems of classroom management into seven major approaches: the authoritarian, behavior modification, common sense, group process, instructional, permissive, and socioemotional climate managerial approaches.

The authoritarian approach places the teacher in the role of establishing and maintaining order in the classroom through the use of discipline (Chamberlin, 1971; Dollar, 1972; Dreikurs and Cassel, 1972; and Weber, 1977). The major goal of the teacher is to control student behavior through the use of pressure and force (Dreikurs and Cassel, 1972). The teacher assumes full responsibility for controlling student conduct. This is often done by creating and enforcing numerous rules and regulations (Dollar, 1972).

The behavior modification approach is seen as having a theoretical basis in behavioral psychology. Its major assumption is that behavior is learned and that several basic processes--positive reinforcement, punishment, extinction, and negative reinforcement--account for learning (Buckley and Walker, 1970; Brown, 1971; Blackwood, 1971; Clarizio, 1971; Dollar, 1972; Sulzer and Weiner, 1972; Beatty and others, 1973; Shipman and Foley, 1973; Givener and Graubard, 1974; Nielson, 1974; Piper, 1974; Blackham and Silberman, 1975; Madsen and Madsen, 1975; and Weber, 1977). The major role of the teacher in this approach is to

reward appropriate student behavior and withhold the rewarding of inappropriate student behavior. Techniques implemented by the teacher include the use of positive reinforcement (reward) and negative reinforcement (removal of an aversive stimulus) to increase appropriate student behavior, and the use of punishment (an aversive stimulus), extinction (the removal of an anticipated reward), and time-out (removal of the student from a reward) to decrease inappropriate student behavior.

The common sense approach, also known as the "cookbook" or "bag of tricks" approach, does not have a single theoretical or psychological base. Thus, it lacks consistency and a set of principles from which the teacher can generalize. It tends to be reactive rather than proactive. It has been described as an ill-fitting combination of common sense, folklore, and lists of specific prescriptions for teachers to follow (Weber, 1977; and Brophy and Putnam, 1978). Strategies drawn from this approach are unsystematic and short range and tend to treat symptoms, rather than causes.

The group process approach, which is also known as the sociopsychological approach, has its theoretical underpinnings in social psychology and group dynamics. Its major assumption is that schooling takes place within a group context. The central task of the teacher in this approach is to establish and maintain an effective, productive classroom group (Schmuck, Chesler and Lippitt, 1966; Johnson and Bany, 1970; Kounin, 1970; Schmuck and Schmuck, 1975; and Weber, 1977). The assumptions underlying the group process approach are: (1) schooling takes place within a group context; (2) the major task of the teacher is to establish and maintain an effective, productive classroom group; (3) the classroom group is a social system containing properties common to all social systems; and (4) the classroom management task of the teacher is to establish and maintain those conditions which characterize a productive group (Johnson and Bany, 1970; Schmuck and Schmuck, 1975; and Weber, 1977). Johnson and Bany (1970) assert that there are two major types of classroom management activities: (1) facilitative behaviors which are used to attain unity and cooperation, establish standards, and coordinate work procedures; and (2) maintenance behaviors which are used to maintain and restore morale, handle conflicts, and minimize management problems.

Schmuck and Schmuck (1975) identified several properties regarding groups, which include: (1) clear expectations; (2) shared leadership; (3) high attraction; (4) productive group norms; (5) open communication; and (6) high cohesiveness. Kounin (1970) has also identified several teacher techniques which are essential for productive classroom groups. These include "withitness," behaviors which communicate to students that the teacher knows what is going on in the classroom; "overlappingness," behaviors which indicate that the teacher is able to attend to more than one issue at a time; movement management behaviors ("smoothness" and "momentum") which enable the teacher to initiate, maintain, and terminate classroom activities smoothly and with freedom from slowdowns; and group focus behaviors ("group alerting" and "accountability") which enable the teacher to keep students on task.

The instructional approach to classroom management advocates the use of instructional teacher behavior to prevent or stop student disruptive behavior (Weber, 1977). This approach is based on the assumption that carefully planned and executed instruction will prevent most student behavior problems and solve the others. Thus, the major managerial task of the teacher is to deliver well-planned instruction.

The permissive approach places the teacher in the role of promoting the freedom of students and fostering their natural development by maximizing student freedom (Weber, 1977). The permissive teacher does not question, criticize, or command. In essence, the teacher interferes as little as possible while encouraging self-expression.

The socioemotional climate approach has its theoretical basis in counseling and clinical psychology. In this approach, it is assumed that effective management is largely a function of positive teacher-student and student-student relationships. The teacher is seen as the major determiner of interpersonal relationships and classroom climate (Dreikurs and Grey, 1968; Glasser, 1969; Rogers, 1969; Dreikurs and Cassel, 1972; Ginott, 1972; Grey, 1974; and Weber, 1977).

Ginott (1972) stresses the importance of effective communication in promoting good teacher-student relationships and suggests that teachers talk to the situation and not the character or personality of the student. Glasser (1969) emphasizes student needs for self-worth and respect; he advocates personal involvement of teachers with students as being crucial to successful classroom management. Glasser suggests that it is important for students to learn to

evaluate their own behavior and to make and follow plans for improving their behavior. Dreikurs and Cassel (1972) state that the role of the teacher is to promote democratic classroom processes where students are taught to make intelligent decisions. They also advocate the use of logical consequences rather than punishment in dealing with student misbehavior.

This conceptualization of seven managerial approaches provides a means of organizing classroom managerial behaviors into seven categories. A specific managerial behavior may be classified as belonging to a particular approach depending on its nature and the context in which it occurs. This classification process permits the identification of behavioral clusters which lend themselves to further analysis.

The overall purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between seven clusters of teacher managerial behavior--one for each of these seven approaches--and student on-task behavior. The frame of reference for the study was the individual elementary school classroom. Specifically, the study was designed to examine the relationship between teacher managerial behaviors and student on-task behavior within the context of the elementary school classroom setting.

An examination of the existing research in the field resulted in the formulation of seven directional hypotheses. Each hypothesis called for the testing of the relationship between those teacher managerial behaviors indicative of one of the seven managerial approaches and student on-task behavior. For example, it was hypothesized that a statistically significant negative relationship exists between teacher permissive managerial behavior and student on-task behavior because the literature seems to support this view. The research summarized by Medley (1977) consistently showed permissive teacher behavior to be common in classes of less effective teachers. Rosenshine (1977) and Anderson and Evertson (1979) found that more effective teachers had highly structured classrooms with effectively communicated rules. Therefore, it seemed reasonable to assume that teachers who exhibited a higher percentage of permissive managerial behaviors would not be as effective in promoting student on-task behaviors as would teachers who exhibited a lower percentage of permissive managerial behaviors.

On the basis of Weber's conceptualization and similar analyses of the literature, three teacher managerial approaches were posited as having a statistically significantly positive relationship with student on-task behavior: the behavior modification, group process, and socioemotional climate managerial approaches. Four teacher managerial approaches were posited as having a statistically significantly negative relationship with student on-task behaviors: the authoritarian, common sense, instructional, and permissive managerial approaches.

Procedures

The procedures for this study were designed to examine the relationships between certain clusters of teacher managerial behaviors and student on-task behaviors. Given the hypotheses the study was designed to test, the independent variables were the seven clusters of teacher managerial behaviors: authoritarian, behavior modification, common sense, group process, instructional, permissive, and socioemotional climate managerial behaviors. The dependent variable was student on-task behavior.

The subjects in the study included thirty-five volunteer elementary school teachers from school districts in a large metropolitan area. Teachers in grades one through five, representing nine elementary schools, were included in the study. All of the teachers in the study had a minimum of three years classroom teaching experience, were women, and taught heterogeneously grouped students. The sample included both teachers who had received previous formal training in classroom management and those who had not.

Subjects were observed for two full morning classroom sessions during the second semester of the school year. Morning sessions were chosen because it was during that part of the school day when instruction in reading and mathematics was scheduled in the particular school districts involved in the study. Each of the two sessions was observed by a different member of the data collection team.

During each observation period, the observer recorded student on-task behavior and teacher managerial behaviors. Two instruments were utilized for this purpose: the Student Engagement Rating System (Evertson and Anderson, 1977) and the Managerial Approach Behavior Observation System (Coman, Goldstein, Peacock, and Weber, 1978).

Student on-task behavior data were collected using the Student Engagement Rating System. This instrument is designed to rate student engagement at fifteen minute intervals thoughout an observation period but, for the purposes of this study, was modified to allow for five minute intervals between ratings. It also provides for the collection of information with regard to classroom context and the number of students who can be classified in each of eight different categories of engagement. The student engagement ratings for each observation were combined to yield an average on-task, off-task rating for each teacher.

Teacher managerial behavior data were collected by using the Managerial Approach Behavior Observation System (MABOS). This instrument consists of two parts: an observation instrument and a coding instrument. The observation system consists of a narrative record of classroom managerial behaviors and episodes. Notes of verbal and nonverbal teacher and student behaviors are made during the observation. It was decided to use a narrative observational form rather than a frequency count in order to capture the quality and flavor of the episode being observed. By relating the narrative, which was time-coded, to the student engagement ratings, also time-coded, the linkage between teacher and student behaviors could be examined.

The data collection team was trained to recognize teacher behaviors which were managerial in nature and to categorize them with a high degree of reliability. If there were any questions regarding the nature of a particular episode, the data analysis team had the narrative to provide them with contextual clues. When the observational data had been collected, teacher verbal and nonverbal behaviors were categorized according to the seven category system of classroom management behaviors adapted from the categories developed by Weber (1977). The totals for each category were tallied and the predominant clusters of managerial behaviors for each teacher were then identified. The results for each category were expressed as a percentage of the total managerial behaviors recorded for each individual teacher. For example, the profile of an individual teacher might look like this:

Authoritarian.....36.86%
Behavior Modification.....23.40%
Common Sense.....01.35%
Group Process.....04.00%
Instructional.....20.12%
Permissive.....04.92%
Socioemotional Climate.....09.35%

A Pearson product-moment correlation was performed to determine the nature of the relationships between the teachers' scores in each of the seven MABOS categories and the scores for student on-task behavior and, thereby, test the hypotheses. Scattergrams were constructed for each pair of correlates to provide a visual image of the relationships between variables. A multiple regression analysis was performed to provide a statistical test for curvilinear relationships between variables. Further Pearson product-moment correlations were performed to correlate each of the managerial approaches with the others and to calculate the combined effect of the approaches hypothesized as having a positive relationship with student on-task behavior. All results were considered statistically significant at the ninety-five percent level of confidence.

Results

Table I presents a summary of the results obtained relevant to the seven hypotheses. Four of the hypotheses were accepted at a statistically significant level. It was found that teacher authoritarian ($r = -.48$, $p = .002$) and permissive ($r = -.53$, $p = .001$) managerial behaviors had negative relationships with student on-task behavior. That is, the more authoritarian or the more permissive the teacher's managerial behaviors, the lower the student on-task behavior. Teacher group process ($r = +.51$, $p = .001$) and socioemotional climate ($r = +.32$, $p = .031$) managerial behaviors were found to have positive relationships with student on-task behavior. The more group process or socioemotional managerial behaviors the teachers used, the higher the student on-task behavior. The correlations obtained for teacher behavior modification ($r = +.15$, $p = .192$), common sense ($r = +.03$, $p = .441$), and instructional ($r = .05$, $p = .393$) behaviors and student on-task behavior were not statistically significant.

Several post hoc analyses were made. A multiple regression test for curvilinearity indicated that three variables--authoritarian, group process, and permissive managerial behaviors--had a significant curvilinear relationship with student on-task behavior. As might be expected, an examination of the scattergrams for each of these variables indicated that too little or too much teacher authoritarian managerial behavior and too much or too little permissive managerial behavior were associated with low student on-task behavior. The scattergram for teacher group process managerial behavior showed that a slight increase in teacher group process managerial behavior yielded a large increase in student on-task behavior.

Table I

Summary of Results Obtained from Correlation of
Teacher Managerial Behavior and Student On-Task Behavior Data

Managerial Behavior	Hypothesized Relationship	N	Correlation Coefficient	Level of Significance	Conclusion
Behavior Modification	Positive	35	+.15	.192	Not Accepted
Group Process	Positive	35	+.51	.001	Accepted
Socioemotional Climate	Positive	35	+.32	.031	Accepted
Authoritarian	Negative	35	-.48	.002	Accepted
Common Sense	Negative	35	+.03	.441	Not Accepted
Instructional	Negative	35	+.05	.393	Not Accepted
Permissive	Negative	35	-.53	.001	Accepted

Additionally, each of the teacher managerial behaviors was correlated with each of the others; the results are presented in Table II. Several statistically significant relationships were indicated by the analysis. These seem to lend support to the validity of the behavioral categories conceptualized by Weber and adapted for the MABOS. Teacher authoritarian managerial behaviors were negatively correlated with teacher behavior modification, group process, and socioemotional climate managerial behaviors and positively correlated with teacher common sense managerial behaviors.

Teacher group process managerial behaviors were negatively related to teacher permissive managerial behaviors and positively correlated with teacher socioemotional climate managerial behaviors. Teacher instructional managerial behaviors were negatively correlated with teacher socioemotional climate managerial behaviors. All of the findings are consistent with Weber's conceptualization.

Finally, Pearson product-moment correlations were performed to determine (1) the relationship between teacher behavior modification, group process, and socioemotional climate managerial behaviors--when combined--and student on-task behavior; and (2) the relationship between teacher authoritarian, common sense, instructional, and permissive managerial behaviors--when combined--and student on-task behavior.

This analysis tested assumptions underlying the advocacy of a pluralistic approach in management (Weber, 1977). The pluralistic approach encourages the selective use of the behavior modification, group process and socioemotional climate approaches and discourages the use of the authoritarian, common sense, instructional, and permissive approaches. The results yielded statistically significant results. When behavior modification, group process, and socioemotional climate managerial behaviors were combined and correlated with student on-task behavior, the correlation was found to be +.52, which was significant to the .001 level. As expected, when the remaining four approaches--the authoritarian, common sense, instructional, and permissive managerial behaviors--were combined and correlated with student on-task behavior, the resultant correlation was -.51, which was also significant at the .001 level. Again, these are findings which support Weber's conceptualization.

Table II

Summary of Results Obtained from Correlation of
Each Teacher Managerial Approach with Each of the Others

Managerial Approach	BM	CS	GP	IN	PE	SE
Authoritarian	-.45*	+.30*	-.67*	+.01	+.10	-.61*
Behavior Modification		-.05	+.00	-.12	-.22	+.00
Common Sense			-.24	-.12	-.02	-.27
Group Process				+.04	-.35*	+.29*
Instructional					+.17	-.51*
Permissive						-.14

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.

Discussion

The results of this study suggest that certain groupings of teacher managerial behaviors are significantly related to student on-task behavior in elementary school classrooms. As predicted, the correlation coefficients obtained for the group process (+.51) and socioemotional climate (+.32) managerial behaviors were both positive and statistically significant. The correlation coefficients obtained for the authoritarian (-.48) and permissive (-.53) managerial behaviors were both negative and statistically significant. Thus, the results seem to lend a great deal of support to the notion that the use of group process and socioemotional climate managerial behaviors are positively related to student on-task behavior, while the use of authoritarian and permissive managerial behaviors are negatively related.

Additionally, the results indicate that the use of behavior modification, common sense, and instructional managerial behaviors do not seem to be related to student on-task behavior. However, several observations appear warranted. First, few teachers in the sample exhibited a consistent application of behavior modification strategies. In spite of this, the obtained correlation on (+.15)--while not statistically significant--was positive as predicted. Perhaps a larger sample--one containing teachers who appropriately and consistently utilized behavior modification managerial behaviors--might yield significant relationships. Second, a few teachers in the sample evidenced managerial behaviors which could be categorized as common sense on instructional managerial behaviors. While it is altogether possible that the use of common sense and instructional managerial behaviors is unrelated to student on-task behavior--a conclusion supported by the extremely low (+.03 and +.05) correlation coefficients obtained--a larger sample might have yielded somewhat different results.

When teacher behavior modification, group process, and socioemotional climate managerial behaviors were combined and correlated with student on-task behavior, a strong positive relationship was found. This indicates that there are a group of identifiable, theoretically-based, teacher managerial behaviors and approaches which appear to be positively related to the effective establishment and maintenance of student on-task behavior. The pluralistic use of these three teacher managerial approaches seems to enhance student on-task behavior. Thus, given these findings and the correlations cited earlier, the use of group process and socioemotional climate managerial behaviors certainly should be encouraged and, at the least, the use of behavior modification approach should not be discouraged.

As would be expected, the inverse was found when teacher authoritarian, common sense, instructional and permissive managerial behaviors were combined and correlated with student on-task behavior. The correlations reported earlier and this finding suggest that there are a group of identifiable behaviors and approaches which appear to be negatively related or unrelated to the effective establishment and maintenance of student on-task behavior. Consequently, the use of authoritarian and permissive managerial behaviors hsould be discouraged and the use of common sense and instructional managerial behaviors should not be encouraged.

The results of the study would tend to validate the theoretical conceptualization of managerial behavior categories described by Weber. Further the findings seem to support his advocacy of a pluralistic approach utilizing the behavior modification group process, and socioemotional climate approaches. The results also suggest that MABOS is a useful instrument with which to record and categorize teacher managerial behaviors. The combination of a narrative record of classroom observations with quantitative measures would seem to be an effective method of collecting data for process-process research of the kind conducted here.

While the findings of this study are most encouraging, caution must be utilized in inferring causality based on the presence of a significant correlation between two variables. The Pearson product-moment correlation indicates only that a relationship exists among variables. It does not indicate causality, but only furnishes clues as to cuases which may be tested by means of experimental studies. The findings of this study, it would seem, have suggested a direction for future student on-task behavior.

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